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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Mukesh K. Puri

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LSI CORPORATION
1621 BARBER LANE
MS: D-106
MILPITAS, CA 95035

EXAMINER

KERVEROS, JAMES C

ART UNIT

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2117

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DELIVERY MODE

04/17/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/700,177	Applicant(s) PURI ET AL.	
	Examiner JAMES C. KERVEROS	Art Unit 2117	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 October 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 03 November 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 12/06/2007 has been entered.

This is a Final Office Action in response to the Amendment filed 10/15/2007. Claims 1-18 are presently under examination and still pending in the Application.

New corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in this application because the drawings Fig. 1-3 are informal. Formal drawings may be submitted upon Allowance of the Application.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 10/15/2007 with respect to claims 1-18 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In reference to independent claims 1 and 12 as currently amended, Applicant's argues that Zorian neither discloses nor suggests a repair solution to repair a first set of damaged memories while not repairing and instead flagging a second set of damaged memories, where each of the memories in the second set require an extent of repair which exceeds a pre-determined limit.

In response to Applicant's argument that Zorian fails to disclose "a repair solution to repair a first set of damaged memories", clearly, Zorian, Fig. 2a, describes running a first test of the memory and a first redundancy allocation algorithm 232, which identifies defects and then allocates redundant components to replace those identified defects so as to make the memory usable.

In response to Applicant's argument that Zorian fails to disclose "flagging a second set of damaged memories requiring an extent of repair which exceeds a pre-determined limit" in view of the rejection of claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, the Examiner assumes that the pre-determined limit corresponds to the threshold pass/fail criteria for declaring the device as fail, (i.e., declaring the second set of damaged memories as fail) as un-repairable due to the extensive repair.

According to Zorian of Fig. 8, BIRA engine 802 determines whether a memory array will be repairable or not repairable, based on the assignment of redundant rows or

columns. If at least two faulty cells are encountered in a word either in a memory array, then the row requires repair with a redundant row. If a redundant row does not exist, then the memory array is considered not repairable. If a single faulty cell in the memory array then a redundant column is used for repair, if available. If no spare column is available but a spare row is available, then a redundant row is used for repair. Otherwise, the memory array is considered not repairable.

In this case, the pre-determined limit corresponds to the number of spare rows or columns, where the pre-determined limit is used as a criterion to determine whether a memory array is repairable or not repairable, as described previously.

Therefore, the limitation “flagging a second set of damaged memories requiring an extent of repair” corresponds to the not repairable memory array, since the failed memory array requires extensive repair.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1 and 12, as currently amended, recite the limitation “flagging a second set of damaged memories, wherein each of the memories in the second set require an

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extent of repair which exceeds a pre-determined limit”, which renders the claims indefinite, because it is unclear how a quantity such as “a pre-determined limit” can be compared with an abstract expression “extent of repair”. Normally, one compares a quantity with another quantity. Nevertheless, Applicant's specification describes “flagging of any device as a fail when the device exceeds a pre-determined limit, were a counter establishes the threshold for pass/fail criteria”. Therefore, based on the specification interpretation, the Examiner assumes that the pre-determined limit corresponds to the threshold pass/fail criteria for declaring the device as fail, (i.e., declaring the second set of damaged memories as fail) as un-repairable due to the extensive repair.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Zorian (US 7,237,154) filed: February 25, 2002.

Regarding independent Claims 1, 12, Zorian discloses a method and apparatus that generate an augmented repair signature to repair all of the defects detected in a first test of a memory as well as in a second test of the memory, comprising:

Testing the memories a first time; “A first test of the memory occurs and a first redundancy allocation algorithm 232 is run. The redundancy allocation algorithm identifies defects and then allocates redundant components to replace those identified defects”, Fig. 2b.

Generating a repair solution; “The reconfiguration logic collects data from the results of the redundancy allocation algorithm to generate a first repair signature 234. The first test and/or the repair algorithms may be performed by logic on the chip or by test equipment external to the chip”.

Using the repair solution (first repair signature 234) to repair the memories while flagging those memories whose repair exceeds a pre-determined limit; “The repair signature (234) includes a coded sequence to allocate redundant components to substitute for defective components in order to make the memory usable. The coded sequence loads into registers associated with the redundancy allocation logic to replace all of the identified defective components with redundant components”.

Making an on-chip assessment to test the memories a second time; “A quality assurance built in self-test 236 runs to determine that all defects in the memory have been eliminated through the use of redundant components and that the assigned redundant components have no defects”.

Using the repair solution (234) to repair the memories not previously flagged; “The configuration logic in the processor may receive the existing first repair signature 234 from a storage device external to the chip or from the fuse box. When the reconfiguration logic receives the first repair signature 234, the reconfiguration logic may initiate a second test algorithm and second redundancy allocation algorithm 238 to attempt to repair the memory. The test logic provides the results of the second test, thus all known and identified defects, to the redundancy algorithm to repair all of the defects in the memory. The reconfiguration logic then generates a second repair signature 240. After the redundancy allocation logic assigns the corresponding redundant components to replace identified defective components, then a quality assurance built in self test of the memory 236 runs one more time just to make sure that the redundant components substituted for the defective components, also do not have defects”.

Regarding Claims 2-11, 13-18, Zorian discloses, with respect to claimed limitation of loading a counter with values to establish a threshold for pass/fail criteria, Built-In Redundancy Analysis (BIRA) engine 802, Figs. 8, having a plurality of registers for allocating redundant columns and rows. The registers (804) store information for final self-repair. If the memory is diagnosed as repairable the final contents of the registers contain the addresses of rows and columns to be replaced with the corresponding spare elements. The BIRA engine 802 determines whether a memory array will be repairable or not repairable, based on the assignment of redundant rows or columns.

If at least two faulty cells are encountered in a word either in the lower bank or the upper bank of the memory array, then the row requires repair with a redundant row. If an available redundant row does not exist, then the memory array is considered not repairable.

If a single faulty cell is encountered in a word either in the lower bank or the upper bank of the memory array then a redundant column is used for repair, if available. If no spare column is available but a spare row is available, then a redundant row is used for repair. Otherwise, the memory array is considered not repairable.

In this case, the pre-determined limit corresponds to the number of spare rows or columns, where the pre-determined limit is used as a criterion to determine whether a memory array is repairable or not repairable, as described previously.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAMES C. KERVEROS whose telephone number is (571) 272-3824. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00 AM TO 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jacques H. Louis-Jacques can be reached on (571) 272-4150. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/JAMES C KERVEROS/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2117

Date: 17 April 2008
Office Action: Non-Final Rejection

U.S. Patent & Trademark Office
Alexandria, VA 22314.
Tel: (571) 272-3824, Fax: (571) 273-3824
Email: james.kerveros@uspto.gov